



POEMS

of the Soil and Sea

BY

CHARLES A. WAGNER

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P O E M S
of the Soil and Sea

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1922 POEMS OF THE SOIL AND SEA

by Charles A. Wagner

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DEDICATED TO
JOHN ERSKINE,
Poet and Priest of Life,
In the Academy

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PROEM.

To My Wife
RUTH WARTERS

Vision of visions,
Love of all love,
Beautiful poem
Sung from above

Somewhere and always
Song was your soul;
You are the poet,
Endless the scroll.

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P O E M S
of the Soil and Sea

I

I

All summer have I sat in thought,
Burned my poor brain
And, through lamps of stars
Walked with the pain.
"It is not long" my soul would say,
"It is not long."
Soon Autumn will come down to me
Crazy with song,
She will toe-dance with Gypsy brown feet
Scratching, scratching along the street.

2

I will not say these books are dead,
With summer bending at my door;
A poet's spirit walks by day
When sunlight falls upon the floor
And sings from off the shelf, and lives;
O we are all God's fugitives!

3

All night the twinkling needles wove
A diamond dress of dew,

[1]

An angry father, came the wind
And tore the meshes through;

But silently the Prince of Light
Stole up and snatched the naked sprite!

4

In the morning steadily
I walk down the lawn,
I thrust my bare feet through the dew
Happy I was born.

The quiet is a crystal cup
That splinters when the birds are up. . . .

5

When I went out to call the cows,
I crossed a field half plowed,
And suddenly I found that I
Had walked into a cloud.

Like through a prayer I heard cow bells,
A white dream covered me;
I laughed, remembering how men
Paint clouds in poetry!

6

You will look upon me now
As I cross the last small field

And never understand
How I do not run to you, and yield.

If clouds flew quickly to the sun
O God would burn them, every one;
Green are the leaves of passion's crown,
But love will wait till they are down. . . .

7

Climbing over a county of hills
Is no play,
And when a man is thirsty
The rocks are in his way.

The sun set in a harbor
Of waters lit like flame,
But one must see a sunset
For words are not the same.

There was a farmer lad more kind
Than sixty sunsets are,
He'd rather fetch a mug of milk
Than gossip with a star!

8

Before I even knew
The blossoms died,
The trucks came rumbling down
Bulging barrels at the side,
In which the apples ride.

They should float apples down the river
That men might recognize the Giver. . . .

9

Little grains of dust
Blown from foreign lands,
Clinging to earth forever,
These are my hands,

O sad years in the house I know!
O dead leaves dropping on eternal snow!

10

Through the barren orchard
The sky is pale and sad,
The trees are shriveled women
Who once were color clad.

I try to tell them Spring will sew
New blossoms that are white as snow.

II

From the heart of the tender sparrow,
From the throat of the careless jay
One note was in the singing
Of the flying-songs that day.

From the breath of the early lilac,
From its pink and purple flower,
One worried whispered fragrance
That told the Day, the Hour . . .

And all the meadow-stations
Stirred with the lovely word;
Then suddenly the wind came down,
Hid in the grass, and heard

And over the hills the warning went
To the Valley and violet Wood,
The rustling of the big-tops
Told that it understood. . . .

From the sun on the dancing rivers,
From the rim of the rising moon,
Out of the liquid shadows
One pastoral, one tune,

Over the sleepy meadows
Into the trees it ran,
Thrilling branch and blade and bird
With one alarm: A Man! . . .

III

Regret that I have known you . . . ?
Spring still blows . . .
Forget that I have found you
Like a rose . . . ?

Nay . . . I never shall forget
That sweet smell—
Only, I thought you freer,
Wilder dwell.

Stay—stay within your garden
Planted well,
I dreamed of riot-blossoms
In a dell,

I did not dream of gardens—
(What a fate
To lie a million ages
Near a gate. . . .)

IV

Look, love, how the gentle moon
Wanders stately through the trees,
And the little stars that trail
Are like blossoms torn from these.

We are blossoms of the sod
Torn with stately hands from God,
Taken from His eager bed,
By His gentle fingers led

And His ways are all too soon
Those of stars that trail the moon.

V

Into the heart returns the fallen flower
And none may see the broken pride
That flows, except a heart that sprang
From fallen flowers of the sunless tide. . . .

I have found loveliness where sunlight thrills
Quietly living ivy on a wall,
I have seen violets reach above a field
And toss their tragic faces daisy-tall.

When these have fallen I alone may know,
Each field, each farm, each cloud-swept bower,
Into my heart the fallen blossoms blow,
Into my heart returns the flower.

VI

Why do I love you?
Ask me why
Slim reeds go reaching
For the sky. . . .

Why do I love you?
Do I know
What hidden dream makes
Roses grow . . . ?

I have the reason,
Soul and mind
And the far purpose
Of the wind. . . .

Why do I love you?
Because I
Can never tell you,
That is why. . . .

VII

A child, playing
With its mother's fingers. . . .
So too, O God,
Do I cling to Your Song
And seek Your beauty,
Knowing, ah knowing
That soon you too shall look down
And smile.

VIII

Today there is a warning in the wind,
The dawn was not so silken-light before,
Today there is a spirit warm and kind
Waiting outside the sun-washed, eastern door,
Who whispers: "Take your green and gold
and blue,
Painter of Life, take them along with you!"

IX

Histories do not speak of the green riot;
It is not the clamoring of a land or a people,
Nor rifle-shots from a barricaded street.

Each summer new sabers of green unsheath
Their naked blades to the warm, golden air
Under barrage of pointed tongues of flame. . . .
Charging out over trails and tarry roads—

And there is no loud report of victory
When tiny searching fingers of the ivy
Reach over a telegraph pole. . . .

X

Here on the open highway once I trod
When, in despair, I thought to find my God.
I plucked the painted flowers from the ground,
Laughed with the wind, answered its every
 sound.

I ate my fill of berries by the road,
Drank beauty from a cup that overflowed
In tiny moments of unended joy
So that the skies became a running boy
Shouting against the hills of silent blue,
And joy and I were one lad, that I knew!

I flung my naked body in a lake
And swam from shore to shore for swimming's
 sake.

I slept beneath a catafalque of stars
Until the morning with her colored bars
Came like a rose-cheeked girl who never
 grieves,
Came tip-toeing, blowing to my bed of leaves,
Came from the warm and unastonished South
To set her feeble kiss upon my mouth. . . .
The road was inland with safe lamps glowing
Like dim-lit harbors of sails soft blowing.

Alas! I do not tramp the highway more,
For, once, as I passed by an open door
I heard a young girl playing in the night,
And when I saw her in the parlor light
Her face was shining with a golden dream.
Misty as sunlit vapor did it seem,
And as I looked upon her tiny hands
I saw the sunshine of a million lands.
The keys were washing waters that the rain
Drove out upon the sea in silver stain. . . .
Her mother came, and took the girl to bed,
Blew out the lamps until the house was dead

The night—it hung its colored stars, and yet
There was a light more beautifully set.
The wind—it was so warm and sweet, and yet
There was a sweeter one that I had met.
The road—it was so good to me, and yet
There was another road I can't forget.

XI

When life has had enough of me
And I am done with breath
From silent skies and bending sea,
I shall not dream of death.

I think if Autumn leaves can blow
Into an open sky,
And have a dance or two to show
Before they curl and dry,

I who have known the blue-bird's cry
And tree-top song, I shall not die!

XII

Do not think that I shall hide
Or God shall keep me at his side,
For, restless as I was before
So shall I be forevermore,
And I shall laugh when winds annoy
The peace of tree-tops into joy.

I shall be where rain-drops fall
Along the ivy of the wall,
And if you care to come to me
Tap on the bark of any tree,
And I shall hear you from above
And know you haven't ceased to love.

Do not bring me wreaths of flowers
Or pray beside this little mound
For, with the first warm driving showers
I shall have risen from the ground!

XIII

How the thought of you is a coming in
From hot fields when the marble hours begin,
The cool, cool hours of evening when the
brown

Tree shadows turn their western faces
down. . . .

How the thought of you is a sweet cool drink
Out of the glistening well or at the brink
When stars are in the bucket as you pull;
I look in your heart and emerge brimming
full. . . .

XIV

Long did I wonder at the carpet of blue,
O to plunge far down into its mystic waters
And drown in a glory of dew. . . .

From somewhere came moving white-robed
sails
And raced their changing shallops across the
inverted sea
Stretching and urging in scattering splen-
dor. . . .

I knew not which would win, for all were
equally great and fleet,
But soon one lone sail remained of all the con-
test,
One did not part and melt, like snow that
falls in the sea. . . .
One rolled on and on, breaking each delicate
fleecy thread
Until the race was won
And the medallion of gold. . . .

I must helplessly cling to earth
And the young, frail, new-budding trees

Sway in despair with me. . . .
We have a common desire,
We would roam the silken waters of the misty
 Heavens,
Rootless and branchless, and at last be free;

On Earth the smallest sparrow
Brings Jealousy. . . .

XV

I take the road that leads me there,
The quiet woods I know,
No feet but mine have ever trod
That pathway gemmed with snow.

All year the sun sleeps on the stones,
The air is still and mild,
There is a trembling quiet like
The dreaming of a child.

Here sorrows do not ever walk
Nor pain nor any fears,
There's never a time the quiet woods
Have failed to dry my tears.

Only once there was a stirring
In that silent place,
In wonderment I stood and watched
The storm clouds spread and race

Through tree tops maddened with the wind
And furious and wild;
There was no quiet then, no dream
Resembling any child.

Somewhere I knew another's heart
Had caught unconquered woe;
Tossing of quiet woods, and storm,
Melted eternal snow,

These are not written for the fields;
Rage in a quiet wood,
O I have read your lips at last,
O I have understood!

XVI

Magic of white sunlight on green
Is over now. . . .
Only whispers of blue between
The grass, and how

A sky brings home her tired flocks
From crimson halls.
As Night takes down her jeweled box
Silver dust falls. . . .

But you have laughed with love, you seem
Out of Time's care,
And moon-white roses in a dream
Are not so fair. . . .

All June lies sunken, with her skies
And her bright bars;
Are you an angel, that your eyes
Are pools of stars . . . ?

XVII

Moments are tiny fireflies
Signalling to my soul,
Flickering fireflies
In the twilight. . . .

The muscles of a bird's throat
Moving in song,
The faint whispers of a lost love
Which say: "I have time to linger
In your dream, and you may touch me yet a
while—
Until your own cry wakes you, you may touch
me"

Moments are snowy branches
Broken by the winds. . . .

O the sunspilling sweeps
Of a church organ,
O the flying journeys
And the singing meadow-maidens
And the endless procession
Of warm Beauty. . . .

Give me such voice that I
Might split the sky;
Out of the storm and thunder
Does music fly. . . .

Your fires, O Soul, are moments
Kindled with pain;
Tears do not ease desire
Nor can the rain. . . .

XVIII

Last night there lit upon my bed
A pale blue spectre, cold and dread.
I thought it wore a mantle new
And heavy with a crystal dew.
Its feet and hands like elfin thieves
I knew had been a'chasing leaves.
It had a way of giving pain
And smelling sweetly of the rain.
It whispered with its purple lips
Of flying foam and tossing ships
And bending over me, it said:
"The summer that you love is dead! . . .
Dawn will not step across the dew
With pink-white toe or velvet shoe,
Nor will blue blossoms strew the air,
Or golden flowers toss their hair
Again . . . the trees will all be bare,
And winds will hold loud meetings there! . . ."

XIX

Shadows have music too, and shadows know
Passion and sensibility and pain.
Half of my life across the snow I throw
In shadow. . . . It shall dwell with me again
When Spring, the blossom-haunted, walks the
 earth,
Blessing the meadows with a song of birth.

XX

TO R. W.

I will turn back an hour, today
I will steal down a lovely way
Hazy with gold and tender blue;
In fancy I will walk with you
Again. . . . It will be good to see
Your face lit up with melody. . . .

In the low hills your laughter rang
Against white fog—. Always you sang
With simple meaning, yet apart—
You sang the beauty of your heart,
And in your eyes there was a gleam
Of light half militant, half dream.

The book that we had partly read,
The dead sage slumbers still, the red
Leaf keeps the page, and drooped and dry
A trembling violet tries to die.
Life Giver, touch again this flower
With Spring . . . !

I will turn back an hour,
And in the everlasting dew
Fancy will let me walk with you. . . .

XXI

Show me the lips that know no hour of song
When sunlight falls on green with hot embrace,
When violets hide, and daisies bravely throng,
And cushion-clouds are trailing in blue
space.

The year flaunts green and gold and blue to turn
With laughing eyes our semblance from the dead,
And summer gathers these to flame and burn
In tireless vigil, like a torch of red.

O Spring's a little girl with pink-white toes,
But Summer thrills the fingers of a root,
Her lips are smoother than the dewy rose;
In her warm arms the trees toss down their
fruit.

XXII

Each year ten thousand people ride
In summer to the country side,
They come in silk and satin gown
Treading the lovely woodland down
So that a farmer lad must creep
In shame behind his careless sheep,
So that the stars rain in the dew
A tearful silver retinue,
So that the valley looking up
With hotel lights within its cup
Asks God for simple folk again
Who take their bread and butter plain.

XXIII

Two farmers lived in a small town
With furrowed land a'sloping down
The valley; both were giant men
And could turn over ground for ten.
Ploughing a field or pitching hay
Was nothing more than so much play.
The buzz-saws sang without a stop
Down at the mill, when they would chop.
Vermont snow storms went sweeping by
Unheeded . . . their wood-piles were high. . . .

But one of them, the one named Brown
When chores were done, he would steal down
A book or two, and in the light
Of an oil lamp would read all night. . . .
They say that he was seen to be
Once in the County Library. . . .

The other man named Roy is dead;
Blue flowers grow above his head. . . .
Brown's bed is overgrown with weed—
Brown wrote a little book on "Seed". . . .

XXIV

Dead summer leaves upon the forest floor,
Oft, when your maples swayed contentedly,
Proud with their burden, did your accents pour
Blessed o'er me. . . .

What Might am I, or by what fabled charm
Given my feet to trample your long sleep?
Yet would you bid me step in no alarm
Soft, ankle-deep

Into your bosom that has combed the wind,
What though the sun, of bitterness in rain
Leaving for tears, sweet sap of Faith entwined
To flow again!

Hushed in the holy stillness of your might,
Yours is the charity of God. I see
In your dry midst of fallen leaves that light
He made to be. . . .

XXV

My soul is a purple cavern
Open for them that pass,
Flowers that life has relinquished,
Violets smothered by grass,
Wind in the hills, night forsaken
Dawns all dewy with tears;
My soul is a purple cavern
Heavy and sad as the years.

XXVI

In the quiet valley
The sun found gossip:
“Do you know” asked a brown blade of grass
Of its green neighbor,
“Do you know whether winter has passed?”
“What is winter?” asked the green blade.

Hill trees whispered something about a moon
Taking the sky far off,
And the truant sun said to the hill-flowers:
“The moon shall come here searching for my
 secrets,
But tell him nothing, I beg you”
And she stole away over the mountains.

When the moon with silver lips that night
Whistled down to the flowers
They were shut tight,
Feigning sleep.
A million fire-flies signalled to him—
But he thought they were only
Mocking the stars.

XXVII

I shall be turning down unending lanes
Of loveliness, and singing as I go,
The quiet flowers shall consult the wind
Of this strange wanderer who dares to know
The secret of God's tranquil ways below.

I shall be asking of the wind no tune,
Nor of the roadside flower any sweet,
Only my voice shall tell my soul's power,
Only my heart shall quicken at His feet
Where poets long before found strange retreat.

XXVIII

I pounded on the iron gates
That open from within,
A voice in that strange sanctum said:
"You may not enter in."

I pounded harder (feet and hands)
Restless as a dream,
I shouted through the spiked bars
That muffled every scream. . . .

Dawn came like peace, the bars grew soft,
The gateman's bolt undid,
The gates fell forward on the path
As every cross-bar slid.

My face, so wet with young love's tears
Turned not from easy flight
But, like a cave soul given wings,
Stepped gladly in the light.

I might have been more hesitant,
The years ahead shall say.
Walls do not yield as easily
To love, as to decay;
A gate moves but one way. . . .

XXIX

When strangely still this heart shall lie,
For all the roving blue
Of some warm, deep Autumnal sky,
I shall not think of you. . . .

When grasses seek to grow above
A white, consenting brow
And wonder-eyed, the daisies shove
Unseen,¹ I may know how
In darkness to despatch my love
This way or that. . . . How can I now. . . ?

XXX

The years shall thunder by,
The years of pain;
Sorrow shall beat her wings
In vain—in vain,

For Time's the fleet shadow
Of a white cloud,
That does not cross the hill
Till the field's plowed. . . .

And like a plow in Spring
Laughs to the sod,
Time floats across the sky
To smile on God. . . .

Deep is the furrow made!
The daisies droop
Under the turning earth
As martyrs stoop.

To print a clean, white kiss
Upon Earth's hand,
And then go down and dream
Their Purple Land. . . .

The years shall wander by,
The years of pain,
And Love shall have her day
Again—again. . . .

XXXI

A tomb-like silence is upon the streets;
The hours, so dark, will soon be sprinkling
gray. . . .

Dead world! why is there no completed peace,
But struggling sleep-sounds begging dawn
away . . . ?

I hear my soul astir, I feel it speak
Somewhere on some cool ship where I lie
stretched,

Where Love is one with Peace, and each is
rest. . . .

Along whose dreamy sails my life is sketched

.
A heavy wagon on some far-off street
Is jolting slowly across the cobble-stone;
Then come the ringing heels on the flint walk
That never failed their nightly measured tone,
And now the window-purple flits within,
I see it rolling balls of mist, before
The struggle with the midnight in my room
To leave the early light upon the floor. . . .

Come, purple banners of the silken dawn,

Lighter than kisses . . . come with dew-sweet
lips

To heal in coolness these, my fevered eyes
(White ships are whispering to eager
skies. . . .)

Until I see the slanting sails of ships
Buoyant and bravely bending out to sea
Again. . . . Bravely and boldly I will go. . . .
I do not know what lands may greet me
then—?

My one joy is I do not want to know. . . .

XXXII

God weaved a tapestry
Of pink coral and green,
And spread it over the sea,
But your radiance has faded it;
Which is more than the sun could do,
Or the marring prows of ships. . . .

XXXIII

I'll have music to send me away,
O the winds
With their soft violins that will play,
And the trees
That will stir like a chorus that day. . . .

No processions of people will crowd
At the pier,
There'll be nothing discordant and loud
As I near,

But my soul will go bravely and proud
Without fear
Like a ship that slips noiseless away
Down the bay. . . .

XXXIV

I shall go down to the shore
And watch the sea-gulls there,
And all the wavy waters
Shall glisten in my hair,

I shall walk into sunsets,
Open fires of the West
And ease my heart with beauty
That lets me lie and rest. . . .

Better than the cold kisses
Of your unyielding mouth
Shall be the wind upon my face
That thrilled the tropic South,

And sweeter than your singing
Shall sing the slanting rain,
Because hers is a melody
That does not end in pain.

When rain collects her music
And steps down from the sky
She kisses all the flowers
And sets white clouds to fly,

She sprinkles all the meadows
With perfume from above;
The rain knows more than you do
Of music and of Love. . . .

XXXV

I remember a yellow butterfly
Searching along Broadway
For some meadow.
But my pity vanished
When it fluttered by a florist's window
And would not even look in. . . .

XXXVI

The town where my love lives
Is a quiet town,
The trees wait and listen
And no sound comes down,

The streets have a holy
Heavenly whiteness,
Often I've seen there
God's torch of brightness.

How the wind saddens
When it runs there,
Finds nothing but petals
And green willow hair,

Finds no voice but sunlight
Ready to sing,
Uttering notes that
The higher winds bring.

I take my chair there
And sit by her door,
And all that my love sings
I know from before.

No one can see her,
White is the door,
Green is the carpet
Spread on the floor,

Golden the windows,
Easy the knob,
Turning upon the
First little sob.

Only I see her,
Only I hear,
Night does not fill me
With any fear,

The town where my love lies
Is a high town,
Only the living
Ever come down.

XXXVII

Cool autumn works no changes here,
She does not paint green leaves to red,
Ah no, these things have vanished now,
The Indians that once danced are dead,
The white, broad days of sun have fled.

A squaw with earthen bowl would sit
All day upon this spot and be
Content with blue warmth in the air,
And white birds flung themselves to sea
Like stitched upon a tapestry.

There was a whisper in the roar,
The sunless street swarmed gray and old,
"Peace will not soon return again"
The ancient roots and ivy bold
Their million hovering spirits told,
Dreaming of amber and of gold.

And suddenly a calm came down
And tired peace began to creep
Into the tortured places where
The noises had gone down most deep;
I thought I heard the weary arms
Of Indians, stirred in troubled sleep. . . .

XXXVIII

Far in Virginia's eyes I see
The shining wealth of Italy
Upon whose diamond hills the sun
Plays with the sea in unison.
Those eyes are tales that sailors tell
When ships are mounting in the swell,
And in her dream-lit hair, lost showers
Of ancient gardens store their flowers.

Is it as well that she live here
Pale and contented as the beer
Which her old father drinks at night
Long after turning down the light?
What of the wine her lips once knew,
The purple grapes her fathers grew?
What of the marble of her arms
Swaying in pastorals and psalms,

What of her ashen colored toes
That are ten pearls in slender rows?
Ah, she is far too rare and fine
For hanging clothes upon a line!

XXXIX

The sudden glimpse of a faun,
Your slender body, and your eyes,
Are these things beautiful
Like the beauty of quiet waters
Taking on dawn?

Beauty of quiet waters
Taking on dawn,
How shall I tell your beauty
Above body or eyes
Or a sudden faun?

XXXX

Faint blossoms that fade and fall
Are the fading tattered clouds,
And bitter is the wind on the Connecticut;
Soon night will come,
And the young stars will tell stories,
Their eyes glistening with tears of laughter,
But the older ones will stand by and listen
Unmoved. . . .

Until the fields have begun their twilight
dreams,
Until the tall corn has stopped its playing,
Until the lamps are lit in the tiny farm-houses
And the young boys have brought in the cows,
The sunset lingers. . . .

XXXXI

RUTH

Whether I go from this eternal Vast
Into another, it is one to me.

It was enough, at flight, that I could dip
My wings in rhythm to the song of You,
Enough that, when the storm was at its height
And for the first time, cold winds sought me
down,

It was your lovely breast, your summer heart,
That made my soul a nest, and gave me
warmth. . . .

Our Youth which lives beyond the touch of
years,

Stained with the wine of Music without end
Is Dream Eternal. . . . I recall the day

As clearly as hill-trees painted against
A sky of marching clouds . . . still do I say
Love is for Silence and for Prayer . . . we
lie

Above the houses with their mortal noise,
Wrapped in the peace God sends to Love and
Hills

Above the shadows . . . still in one embrace
I take you with me to Eternity! . . .

XXXXII

The tall men run the harbor,
They stand before the wheel
With lifted faces that the sky
Took centuries to heal

Of paleness, for the land is lean
And men find burdens there,
But the sea will toss her cargoes
Easily in the air.

The small men walk and talk and walk
But never do a thing,
The tall men curl the ropes to deck
And as they work they sing.

The harbor likes tall men to sing
More than the green ocean,
(Harbors and their lamps are altars
Where ships come for devotion.)

The small men keep the long long lists,
They keep them straight and neat,
But the tall men keep the harbor
And kneel down at its feet.

The small men sit and count and count
And never sing at all,
And yet they seem to know the sea
And how the whistles call.

There is a prayer in the tide
Which only tall men hear,
The tall pines know it just before
A storm approaches near.

And sometimes in a morning field
A word comes down from God
And only the tall, thin daisies
Will understand and nod.

.

The tall men run the harbor,
They stand before the wheel
Like singing priests; their voices are
Cathedral organ-peal. . . .

XXXXIII

I

This is the sorrow that returns to me
Always when I have been away from you,
Beautiful sea, God's book of holidays,
Turning white parchments under lamps of
blue.

Let me not walk the grainy lands too long,
For my heart fills itself with dust and death,
And pallid streets, and cities, and brown roads
Lead me but back again to your brave breath.

There is a path that does not ever end
Where earth paths end, in flowers eased with
dew,
There is a silent trail no traveller
Has stumbled on, where no bee ever flew.

There is a journey that is never done,
There is a brook whose sound no pebbles play,
This is the sorrow that returns to me,
This is the weeping tears can not allay.

II

You who have found the valley and the hill,
How I should like to be of you once more,
Who, tired or timid of the trees and flowers,
Make a soft bed upon the forest floor.

Bright are the hills at dawning, bright and still
The steaming valleys in the quiet morn,
And on the hillsides bloom the violets—
Light-headed, girlish flowers, million born.

III

This is the sorrow that returns to me,
Always my heart is crying with that pain,
There is no ending of the wave, no shore
That does not lead me back to you again.

If I have known your beauty, you have robbed
For that sweet treasure, all my ancient rest,
The proud, swift joy of plowing up a field,
The harvest glow of faces in the west,

The silver morning wind, the start of rain
Among the trees, the crow's call in the sky,
The grass-enchanted hillside where sleep comes
Like the coming of a small butterfly.

Rain sweeps the decks with foaming, angry
fear,
There is no fireside shelter for a crew;
This is the sorrow that returns to me,
Beautiful sea, when I am thrilled with you!

IV

Aching and tired, a ship crawls into port
With crumpled sails, like a torn butterfly.
Pinned to a post she lies, and when the sun
Warms her, and soothes her pain, she does
not cry

As one too young for burdened conquering;
She rears her head, shakes off the ready tear,
Breathes of the harbor till her wings are full,
And seeks your arms again, forgetting fear.

V

Where is the laughter of your early promises
That tore my easy love from earth to you?
Where is the hill that hides you from my heart,
Where is the passion that your rhythm grew?

If I could find desire in your eyes,
If I could touch your lips, my soul would rest,
But in your wanton love there is no goal,
In your embrace a darker dream is pressed.

Your eyes are sunken caves of bravery,
Your lips are dead fires after long, long rain;
This is the sorrow that returns to me,
Always my heart is crying with that pain.

If I could catch your laughter in my ears,
If I could bind your bosom to my heart!
This is the sorrow that returns to me,
Always that fearful dream will not depart.

XXXXIV

Always the wave turns back upon the shore
After long days of open sea and sun,
Stretching wide arms on warming sands once
 more
To feel the magic of oblivion,

For though the riding seas are crowned in gold
And toss their changing sides in deep delight,
There are no sands for rest, no shells to hold,
No songs to play along the beach at night. . . .

They say the wind is made of air and foam;
I think the wind is God's compelling hands
That send the sailor to his island home
More eager than dull waves on glistening
 strands.

XXXXV

MOTHER

Over the paleness of your saint-like face
Let no pain mar that tiredness and grace
Which none may understand save those who
 race
Timeless and poet-wise and music limbed.

Over your eyes some Heaven unbedimmed,
Mounting new angels of your Godlike Good,
And on that forehead white with solitude
Let no sorrow again be understood.

You are my dream, my book of God, my song,
In your sweet soul my poems all belong.

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of the Soil and Sea

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